

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	1 September 2021
Subject:	Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage: Design Guidance for Tewkesbury Supplementary Planning Document
Report of:	Planning Policy Manager
Corporate Lead:	Head of Development Services
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Built Environment
Number of Appendices:	One

Executive Summary:

In response to the changing nature of shopping habits and increases in the surrounding populations, the Borough's historic retail areas are having to adapt and play to their strengths by maintaining and enhancing themselves as a distinctive and culturally rich shopping and leisure experience.

It is recognised that the appearance of the Borough's historic retail areas can be negatively impacted by unattractive and inappropriate shopfronts and associated signage. The purpose of this guide is to promote good shop front and signage design within the historic areas of the Borough and to offer guidance to designers and applicants in submitting planning proposals. The intention is to promote good design practice without stifling innovation yet respecting the historic character of buildings and the areas.

The guidance underpins Policy DS4 of the emerging Local Plan and other related policies.

Although this document serves the whole Borough its publication is particularly timely to Tewkesbury town in that it will complement the launch of grant funding to restore and repair of traditional shopfronts as part of the Tewkesbury High Street Heritage Action Zone.

Recommendation:

- 1. To APPROVE the draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for consultation: Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage: Design Guidance for Tewkesbury.**
- 2. To delegate authority to the Head of Development Services, to make any necessary minor amendments to the draft document as considered appropriate prior to consultation.**

Reasons for Recommendation:

To consult on the draft SPD in accordance with the The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Resource Implications:

Resource implication on officer time to conduct the consultation, review responses and make amendments as appropriate.

Legal Implications:

The preparation of an SPD is not a statutory requirement, but a decision for each local planning authority based upon demands for further information to assist in the delivery of sustainable

development and to provide further guidance on policies within the Development Plan. An SPD cannot in itself establish planning policy; it must be consistent with national and local planning policies. Before a local planning authority can adopt an SPD it must carry out formal public consultation, followed by the provision of a Consultation Statement setting out who was consulted in the preparation of the SPD; a summary of the issues raised; and how those issues have been addressed. This must then be consulted on along with the amended SPD. The SPD can then be put forward for adoption. Once adopted the SPD would be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Risk Management Implications:

There is no statutory requirement to prepare SPDs. However, it is considered to be important that Tewkesbury Borough has appropriate planning guidance for the design of shopfronts and signage to assist both the public and officers in regard to related planning applications. Furthermore, Tewkesbury Borough Council is embarking on a major project to improve shopfronts in Tewkesbury Town centre from June 2021 as part of the Tewkesbury High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) scheme. This scheme will make funds available to building and business owners to improve the appearance of their buildings within the streetscene. It is therefore important to maximise the effectiveness of this scheme to enhance the character and street scene of Tewkesbury Town Centre and ensure the success of this particular project and funding.

Performance Management Follow-up:

Subject to the adoption of the SPD, the effectiveness of the SPD and the policies and guidance contained within will be monitored by the Conservation Officer.

Environmental Implications:

The SPD contains further detail and advice in relation to the emerging JCS and Tewkesbury Borough Plan policies on design and quality of the environment. The specific objective of the guidance is to improve the character and appearance of the historic environment within Tewkesbury Borough.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 Shops in most of our town centres and larger villages in England are facing substantial challenges due to changes in shopping habits, a factor that may have accelerated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The population in Tewkesbury Borough is also set to rise significantly due to the Garden Town initiative and other surrounding housing developments. It is not possible for our town centres and larger villages to compete with the retail parks on the outskirts of Cheltenham and Gloucester but it is necessary for them to play on their strengths to attract and maintain customers and visitors.

- 1.2** There are examples of inappropriate and unauthorised shop signage and alterations to historic shopfronts within our historic retail areas that detract from their character and appearance. The purpose of this guide is to promote good shop front design and to offer guidance to designers and applicants in submitting planning proposals. The intention is to promote good design practice and not to dictate a particular style or stifle innovation. However the period and style of the property needs to be respected, and so there is a particular focus on traditional detailing. The guidance includes a historic context to shopfront development and design and provides a clear identification of elements of good design and inappropriate design.
- 1.3** A shopfront design guide is a common document amongst local planning authorities and is generally accepted as a valuable tool in regards to managing historic areas. There is also a specific policy within the emerging local plan regarding shopfronts (DES4), the guide will underpin this and the other related policies.
- 1.4** The publication of this guidance is timely in that it will complement the launch of a grant scheme to fund restoration and repair of traditional shopfronts in Tewkesbury town as part of the Tewkesbury High Street Heritage Action Zone.

2.0 NEXT STEPS

- 2.1** Further to Member approval, the draft SPD will be published for a six week consultation period over Autumn 2021. Following the consultation, responses will be collated and any appropriate amendments made to the SPD. As required by regulation 12 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, a Consultation Statement will be produced setting out who was consulted, the main issues raised and how those issues have been responded to. This will then be consulted on, along with the final SPD. The SPD will then be put forward to the Council for adoption.

3.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

- 3.1** Tewkesbury Borough Local Plan to 2011.
Joint Core Strategy.
Emerging Tewkesbury Borough Plan (2011-2031).

4.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

- 4.1** National Planning Policy Framework.
National Planning Practice Guidance.

5.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

- 5.1** Resource implication on officer time to conduct the consultation, review responses and make any amendments as appropriate.

6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

- 6.1** The preparation of the *Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage: Design Guidance for Tewkesbury* SPD provides an opportunity to manage the character and appearance of Tewkesbury Town centre in a manner that promotes tourism and trade. It provides Officers, businesses and building owners with the guidance to create and maintain an attractive and characterful environment for the community which encourages stability and wellbeing in the population.

7.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

7.1 None.

8.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

8.1 None.

Contact Officer: Conservation Specialist.

Appendices: 1 – Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage: Design Guidance for Tewkesbury. Strategic Planning Document.